



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: June 15, 2011

TO: Creeks Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program
Citizen Advisory Committee

FROM: Liz Smith, Creeks Outreach Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Education and Outreach Program Update**

COMMITTEE DIRECTION – FOR DISCUSSION

That the Committee receive an update on the Creeks Division's education and outreach program.

BACKGROUND

The overall objectives of the Creeks Division education and outreach programs are to increase awareness of the causes of and actions to prevent water pollution, foster community stewardship of the creeks, and communicate the efforts of the Creeks Division to the residents of Santa Barbara.

Outreach efforts are guided by the Creeks Division's Public Education Plan, as well as the City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), which outlines measurable goals that must be met each year, including youth education, event participation, and media campaigns.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach efforts, the Creeks Division has conducted two Public Opinion Surveys, in 2002 and 2008. Another survey will likely be conducted in 2013 to gauge the community's awareness of water quality issues, and willingness to change behaviors in order to protect local creek and ocean water quality.

YOUTH WATERSHED EDUCATION

Creek Kids Series and Watershed Resource Center Field Trips

The Creeks Division contracts with Art From Scrap's Green Schools Program to provide youth watershed education to students in kindergarten through twelfth grade in the City of Santa Barbara. The Creek Kids series consists of two in-class presentations, a field trip to a local creek, and a visit to the Watershed Resource Center (WRC) at Arroyo

Burro Beach, where they participate in a beach clean-up. The students learn about watersheds, creeks, plastic marine debris, sources of water pollution, and what they can do to help improve local water quality. In Fiscal Year 2010, over 4,900 students participated in the Creek Kids series and/or field trips to the WRC.

Adams Elementary School Bioswale

As part of the recently completed Upper Las Positas Creek Restoration and Storm Water Management Project, a bioswale was installed on the Adams Elementary School campus. Over the past two years, 600 students have participated in educational activities at the bioswale. Local poet and educator Sojourner Kincaid Rolle led students on “before and after” observational trips to the bioswale, which incorporated art and poetry. Students also helped install hundreds of native plants at the site and conducted water quality testing. Teachers now use the space as an outdoor science lab and classroom on a weekly basis.

Youth CineMedia

Since 2007, the Creeks Division has worked with Youth CineMedia, a nationally recognized program that teaches at-risk teens the fundamentals of digital filmmaking, music production, photojournalism, and graphic design. With approximately 100 participants each year, Youth CineMedia has produced various English and Spanish print and bus advertisements, video public service announcements, short films, and outreach materials for the Creeks Division.

Parks & Recreation Programs

This summer staff will collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Department to provide creek and water quality related presentations to campers at Nature Camp. The Creeks Division has also worked with the City’s Recreation Afterschool Program (RAP) and Afterschool Opportunities for Kids Program (A-OK!) at Adams Elementary School to provide presentations and activities related to the new bioswale.

Summer Youth Apprentice Program

During summer 2010, the Creeks Division participated in the City’s Youth Apprentice Program, hiring three high school students to work under the supervision of an intern on a restoration project on Old Mission Creek at Bohnett Park. The intern and apprentices removed non-native vegetation from the creek, and installed 263 native plants.

MERITO

The Creeks Division partners with the MERITO (Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans) program of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary each year to lead elementary school students in water quality testing and creek restoration projects. In January, 50 students from Adelante Charter School and Franklin Elementary School visited Sycamore Creek, where they tested the temperature, pH, and dissolved oxygen levels in the creek, and planted 80 native plants.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community events provide great opportunities to talk to community members one-on-one, and are an important component of the Creeks Division's outreach efforts. In addition to events that are hosted by the Creeks Division, staff provides information at the Earth Day Festival, the Harbor & Seafood Festival, and many other events each year. Various informational brochures, flyers, activity books, and water quality enforcement magnets are distributed at each event, and new posters and display materials are produced for particular programs and projects as needed. At each event, visitors are invited to take a "Clean Creeks Pledge" and make a personal commitment to adopt behaviors that will help protect local water quality.

Creek Week

The Creeks Division partners with County of Santa Barbara, the City of Goleta, and the City of Carpinteria each year to organize Creek Week, a full week of events celebrating our local creeks and watersheds. During the 2010 event, over 1,400 community members participated in 23 events hosted by various local groups and organizations. Over 5,000 pounds of trash and debris was removed from local creeks and beaches, and 311 native plants were planted at creek side locations during the week. This year will mark the 12th annual Creek Week, which will again kick off with Coastal Cleanup Day on September 17th, 2011. Interested community members and organizations are welcome to visit www.sbcreekweek.com to get involved.

Community Forum

Each year, the Creeks Division hosts a community water quality forum in order to educate the public about a particular issue or project. The forum is televised in both English and Spanish on City TV, and archived online at www.sbcreeks.com. In 2010, the forum featured a presentation by Scott Reynolds of Environmental Canine Services, LLC, as part of the Canine Scent and Microbial Source Tracking project. Attendees were able to meet "Sable the Sewage-Sniffing Dog" and learn about new efforts to use dogs to track sources of human waste in the local storm drain system. In 2009, the forum featured Dr. Marcus Eriksen of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation, who provided a presentation on the impacts of plastic marine debris.

Volunteer Events

The Creeks Division works with various local schools and organizations to plan volunteer creek and beach clean-ups, native planting days, and field trips. Horny Toad Activewear has been a longtime community partner, cleaning West Beach near their office on a regular basis, participating in storm drain marking events, and helping plant native plants on Mission Creek at Oak Park. Additional volunteer groups over the past year have included participants in United Way's Fun in the Sun Program, the Santa Barbara Graduate Institute, a local Brownie Troop, and students from Garfield High School in Los Angeles. In May, the entire third grade at Peabody Elementary School (approximately 100 students) participated in field trips to Mission Creek at Oak Park, where they helped plant 200 native plants.

Looking Good Santa Barbara

Since 2009, the Creeks Division has participated in the Environmental Services Division's Looking Good Santa Barbara Eastside community clean-up. At the April event, staff worked with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and six enthusiastic volunteers to conduct a trash survey and clean approximately 1,500 feet of Sycamore Creek. Volunteers removed plastic bags, bottles, cans, cigarette butts, broken pieces of ceramic tile and pottery (which they kept to use for an art project), a rug, a bed frame, and large pieces of rebar and metal pipe from the creek. Staff is currently working with the Environmental Services Division to plan a Westside neighborhood cleanup to coincide with this year's Creek Week.

Adopt-a-Beach

The Creeks Division administers the California Coastal Commission's Adopt-a-Beach Program in the City of Santa Barbara. Recent beach adoption groups include Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, the Chumash Maritime Association, Macy's Partners in Time Program, SBCC Beach Angels, and the Santa Barbara Hyatt. In 2010, over 3,400 pounds of trash and debris was removed from our local beaches by these organizations, who contributed 561 volunteer hours throughout the year.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Television Public Service Announcements

In 2010, the Creeks Division worked with City TV to produce a series of television public service announcements with the message "The Ocean Begins on Your Street." The PSAs feature beach activities taking place at the storm drain inlet, and are intended to help viewers make the connection between the storm drain system and the ocean. The "Favorite Surf Spot" PSA, starring Creeks Supervisor George Johnson, was recently nominated for a regional Emmy Award. English and Spanish-language PSAs are run each year on local Cox Media television stations and Univision, reaching an estimated 158,000 viewers each month. During summer 2010, PSAs were also run on KEYT. In the coming year, staff will continue to work with Cox Media, Univision, and KEYT, as well as KSBY.

Radio Public Service Announcements

The Creeks Division works with local Rincon Broadcasting stations and KDB to produce and air radio PSAs each year, reaching an estimated 54,600 listeners per month. The PSAs are run on both English and Spanish-language stations, and relate back to the television PSAs with the message "The Ocean Begins on Your Street."

Print Advertising

Throughout the year, the Creeks Division runs print advertisements in the *Independent* featuring images from "The Ocean Begins on Your Street" television campaign. The ads include tips related to everyday activities that can contribute to poor water quality. Ads promoting Certified Clean Water Businesses are run in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine*. The full Creek Week schedule and associated ads are run in the *Independent*, the *Santa Barbara Daily Sound*, and *CASA Magazine* each year. A

Spanish-language ad designed by Youth CineMedia is run in *SB Latino* (formerly *El Mexicano*), a bi-weekly newspaper published by the *Santa Barbara News-Press*. Public meeting notices are printed in various local publications as needed.

MTD Bus Advertising

The Creeks Division runs advertisements on the interiors and exteriors of Metropolitan Transit District buses each year, in a partnership with the County of Santa Barbara Project Clean Water and the City of Goleta. Last summer, both internal and external ads featured images from “The Ocean Begins on Your Street” campaign. Ads installed on the exteriors of the buses this month were inspired by and incorporated a mural created by Adams Elementary School students. The image shows a healthy watershed next to an unhealthy watershed, illustrating the concept that everyone in the community can have an effect on local water quality.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET-BASED OUTREACH

SBCreeks.com

The Creeks Division's website, www.sbcreeks.com, received nearly 7,000 visits in 2010. Information on various projects and programs is provided online, as well as Creeks Advisory Committee meeting notices and videos, a video library of PSAs and programs, a full list of Certified Clean Creeks Businesses, and much more. Reports and studies produced by and for the Creeks Division are posted, and a page is dedicated to science project ideas and resources for students. In 2009, the Creeks Division also purchased the domain www.sbcreekweek.com to provide a central location for the community to find information about Creek Week activities.

Email Newsletter

Each month, the Creeks Division sends an email newsletter to over 500 subscribers. The “e-News” includes project and program updates, Clean Water Business announcements, and information on upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Interested community members can sign up for the newsletter and view past issues at www.sbcreeks.com.

Internet Advertising

The Creeks Division has done a small amount of online advertising over the past few years. In 2010, a Creek Week banner ad was run on www.noozhawk.com the weeks prior to and during the event. A banner ad was briefly run on www.independent.com featuring an image of the surfer from “The Ocean Begins on Your Street” PSA, asking visitors to take the Clean Creeks Pledge for a chance to win prizes including “green” goodie bags and a rain barrel. There was a minimal response to the ad, even with the chance to win prizes, but staff is considering ways to continue exploring internet advertising.

Facebook

In January 2011, the Creeks Division created a Facebook page in order to reach community members on a more direct level. Posts to the page have included links to e-News issues, Clean Creeks Certified Business announcements, sharing of water quality

or creek restoration related news articles, and promotion of community events and volunteer opportunities. In the future, staff intends to expand use of the page to include short surveys, calls to action, contests, and more personal interaction with the community. At the time of this report, the page has 40 “Likes” and 10 organizations who have added the Creeks Division as a “Favorite” on their respective pages. Anyone is welcome to view the page and follow the Creeks Division at www.facebook.com/SBCreeks.

YouTube

In February 2011, a YouTube channel was created for the Creeks Division in order to share videos produced by and for the Creeks Division, primarily through posts on the Facebook page. There are only a few videos uploaded at this time, but staff hopes to use this as another interactive tool to help educate the community. The YouTube page can be viewed at www.youtube.com/SBCreeksDivision.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM OUTREACH

Clean Water Business Program

Since 2007, the Creeks Division has certified 105 local businesses who have committed to making an everyday effort to keep our creeks and ocean clean. Certified Clean Creeks Businesses are promoted online at www.sbcreeks.com, in the monthly e-News, as well as in print ads in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine*, and now on the Creeks Division’s Facebook page. Once a business is inspected and certified by staff, they receive a certificate signed by the Mayor and the Creeks Division Manager, and a decal to place in their window identifying them as a certified business. The program is promoted through postcard mailings, a quarterly automotive newsletter, direct contact with targeted business segments, enforcement actions, and at community events. The program is currently open to restaurants, automotive businesses, and mobile washers, with tentative plans to expand to retail businesses in the coming year.

Creek Tree Program

The Creek Tree Program is designed to improve riparian canopy throughout the City by installing native trees on creek side private properties. Outreach efforts for the program began in 2008 with direct mailings of information and follow-up telephone calls about the program to property owners on a reach of Mission Creek near De La Vina Street. With minimal response from this initial effort, staff determined that a personal approach was needed to garner interest in the program. Community events have provided an opportunity to reach several interested property owners, and previous contact with the Housing Authority led to a planting at a creek side apartment building on Sycamore Creek. Over the last several months, a Creeks Division intern went door to door to speak to creek side homeowners about the program, which has proven to be the most successful method of outreach to the community. The intern’s work has led to the installation of 39 trees on four creek side properties, along with several other projects that are in the early planning stages.

Capital Project Outreach and Interpretive Signage

With the installation of large scale capital projects come many community meetings, project tours, and presentations. In the early design phase, the Creeks Division provides presentations to various stakeholder groups, and holds public meetings to seek community input; project tours are often provided during and after construction for the community. Upon completion of capital projects, the Creeks Division often installs interpretive signage to inform the public of what was done, and why. Staff is currently developing signage for the Mission Creek Restoration at the Tallant Road Bridge, the Upper Las Positas Creek Restoration and Storm Water Management Project, and the citywide Catch Basin Screens installation.

Creek Signs

In 2004, the Creeks Division began installing creek signs on pedestrian and vehicle bridges throughout the City. The signs include illustrations of a steelhead (Mission Creek), a heron (Arroyo Burro), and a sycamore leaf (Sycamore Creek), and a message indicating that the creeks flow to the ocean. By making community members aware of the creeks as they walk or drive over them, staff hopes to foster a sense of value, connection, and stewardship toward the creeks.

Storm Drain Markers

Storm drain markers are found on storm drain inlets throughout the City, serving as a visual reminder to the community that storm drains flow directly to our creeks and the ocean. The decals feature a dolphin and fish, with a "No Dumping" message in both English and Spanish. The markers also provide an opportunity for volunteer efforts, with organizations like the Boy Scouts and Horny Toad Activewear participating in storm drain marking events.

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